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Church unity.

INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT OF NORTH AMERICA

Preliminary Suggestions

of the

Laymen's Activities Department

For consideration and revision by the
Laymen's National Conference at
William Penn Hotel, Pittsburgh, Pa.
January 31—February 1-2, 1920

Headquarters of the Movement
45 West 18th Street New York City

FOREWORD

The following suggestions concerning the functions and responsibilities of the Laymen's Activities Department have been very carefully prepared and adopted by the Executive Committee of the Interchurch World Movement. They are based, however, upon the expectation that the first National Conference called for the consideration of this department, will revise, enlarge, amplify and make permanent a comprehensive program, to be referred back to the Executive Committee for adoption.

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OFFICERS OF THE INTERCHURCH WORLD MOVEMENT

Robert Lansing, Chairman General Committee
John R. Mott, Chairman Executive Committee
S. Earl Taylor, General Secretary
William B. Millar, Secretary
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THE LAYMEN'S ACTIVITIES DEPARTMENT

Fred B. Smith, Chairman
Daniel A. Poling, Director

Preliminary Suggestions of the Laymen's Activities Department

THE Interchurch World Movement should make strong appeal to the Laymen of the nation for the following reasons:

1. Because all the incidents of the recent years of war and social change have augmented tremendously the place, power and significance of the life of the common man. He has entered into new and larger influence in social, economic and political affairs, and should therefore be enlisted earnestly for a corresponding new relation to the supreme issues of life as represented in the Christian Church. The Interchurch World Movement, representing practically all of the evangelical churches, is given a unique opportunity in making a nation-wide appeal to these men.

2. Because the advanced interdenominational position occupied by the Movement demands that every advantage be taken of forces favorable to its ideals. In complete recognition of the great interest of many ministers and expert Christian administrators in interdenominational work, recognizing the fact that they have been foremost prophets and leaders in many programs of this character, it is also true that there is a unique, powerful and determined interdenominational sentiment very common among the laymen; therefore this specialization is imperative, that this full sentiment may be brought to bear upon the large interests of the Interchurch Movement.

3. Because the present situation demands a new interpretation of Christian duty among large numbers of laymen throughout the country. During the years of war, very high ground was taken by men and boys everywhere, concerning unselfish, sacrificial service; but with the passing of those abnormal appeals there has been a distinct loss in this realm; multitudes are being swept along by currents of gross materialism and pleasure seeking. While these temptations are to a certain degree manifest to all the people they have peculiar force and peril to the business and professional men of the nation. There is therefore an unparalleled opportunity and need that the Movement initiate a nation-wide call to laymen to realize the vast importance of their being related in positive form to the same kind of service that they felt and knew in the war period.

4. That the largest possible strength may be enlisted in executing the program of the Movement as outlined in the Survey. The Interchurch World Movement, very wisely and happily, is in intimate relations with most of the great missionary boards and denominational agencies, all of which will be of inestimable value in the prosecution of the work, but the proposals are so enormous that the only hope of reasonable success is in the co-operation of vast numbers of laymen who are in vital touch with the life of the cities and towns of the country. The Interchurch World Movement therefore ought to give a large place to the Laymen's Emphasis, that its own program may be made effective.

General Principles

1. That care be exercised at all times to preserve the solidarity of the Interchurch World Movement and to the fullest extent relate the laymen to its whole program.

2. The major effort should be centered in an appeal to business and professional men and to men of all other groups to relate themselves vitally to some form of Christian service, through the church or her accredited agencies; that they be impressed with their peculiar opportunities, and be brought to face the special strain of the times in which they are living. Whether in literature or in addresses delivered, this principle should be made paramount, and relation of laymen to the Interchurch World Movement, as such, incidental.

3. To keep as free as possible from additional machinery and to magnify to the highest degree the inspirational elements. In doing this, it will be necessary and expedient to keep the entire outline of all departments of the Movement in prominence, so that men interested may easily find the sphere in which they can render best service. They should be kept intelligent concerning the whole Movement.

4. To keep in hearty accord with all allied societies in order that in largest measure the special work of the Laymen's Activities Department may make a contribution to each, and that through these agencies it may advance all interests of the Kingdom of God.

Organization

The Laymen's Activities Department will go forward as a part of the Interchurch World Movement and will report as other departments do.

For purposes of administration, a Director of the department will be secured who will be an Associate General Secretary; also a special Field Secretary, and such other assistants as the work may require. The staff will be kept as small as possible; the

new energies aroused will be cleared through other existing departments or kindred societies.

Methods

1. A Conference of a limited number of representative laymen, to be held at an early date, for the purpose of studying the plans of the Interchurch World Movement; for considering common problems of the Christian Church; for the purpose of organizing a small committee to continue as a counseling group for this department and to outline the special service which may be rendered by the laymen throughout the entire country.

NOTE: There should be included in the conference, and in all major gatherings, a few representative pastors, that their view-point of specific church problems may be respected and made available.

2. In conjunction with the Conference and Convention Division of the Field Department, and in harmony with the general plans of the entire Movement, a series of conferences should be held in the great centers of the country for the purpose of presenting the ideals and program of the Movement and of this department.

3. To discover, publish and promote literature which will be of particular profit in extending and making permanent the proposed program.

4. To conduct an inquiry concerning the whole tendency of laymen in relation to the Church, discovering, so far as may be, what forms of service have most influence with them, what elements seem to interfere in securing a yet greater number of them, and any other information which, if made known, might be of profit to the Church and to the organized laity.

Functions

It is the hope of the Department to so interest groups of laymen that they could be rallied promptly to assist in any particular

emergency of the Interchurch Movement, or in any special features of its campaigns, or in any great event of moral issue in the nation or throughout the world. The following items should be given immediate attention:

1. To act in an advisory and cooperative relation to all departments and events of the Movement.

2. To secure small groups in every center, so far as possible, which will be channels of communication for the issues of the Interchurch World Movement and of the Laymen's Department.

3. To organize bands of laymen to carry the Evangelistic Message and the ideals of the Movement to adjacent communities.

4. To magnify the Evangelistic Message by emphasizing the importance of holding definite meetings, evangelistic in character, in connection with all local Interchurch World Movement programs. This issue should be made vital to the laymen wherever they are organized.

NOTE: Immediate responsibility for this phase of the work has been referred to the Spiritual Resources Department, but the Laymen's Department will give to the Spiritual Resources Department its closest support and cooperation.

5. To assist in creating and promoting a program of lay activities for and within the local church.

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